

# A Tribute to Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez

Sir, Today the Roman Catholic Church in India and Bengal is powerful as a force of countercultural resistance because of the contributions of the just deceased Peruvian priest, Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez OP. He single-handedly made the aims and goals of Vatican II possible in the last century through his academic work which later came to be known as Liberation Theology. He did not participate in Vatican II, but history will remember him as the single most important Catholic thinker who shifted paradigms in the last century and continues to inform the life of the Roman Church even today. It is because of him that the universal Church has decided to preferentially opt for the poorest of the poor in the here and now. It is because of Fr. Gutiérrez that all people of goodwill have been sensitised to the horrible lived reality of the forgotten and abject in our society.



This author has been so deeply influenced by liberation theologians like Archbishop Dom Helder Camara and Jon Sobrino SJ that as an initiated Shakti Upasak, I have been forced to recalibrate my life to be preferentially available for the poorest of the poor who want to seek my liturgical services at Tarapith, Birbhum. Because of Fr. Gutiérrez, I have realised that God qua Shakti is preferentially present with those who are most powerless in a world where

the powerful would have us forget the weakest among us.

God sent Fr. Gutiérrez to remind us once again of God's 'hesed' and 'rahamim'. He possessed what the Bible commentator Walter Brueggemann calls the 'prophetic imagination' in Brueggemann's eponymous book. For me, personally, it is as if a light has been snuffed out from this darkling world.

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